

EarthFirst!

No. 47 March 1998

This is the time to get violent with your ally. Fly into the studio (and a jail) on wing (not) feather

HOUSEBUILDERS' HQ FIELD DAY

On 2nd February a group of EF'ers and friends occupied the offices of the House Builders Federation (HBF), which lobbies for building commuter houses on greenbelt land rather than the provision of social housing.

Armed only with their wits and sets of Oligopoly (a Monopoly type board game based on the exploits of the HBF) the group attempted to obtain previously undisclosed info such as a list of HBF members, an explanation for why 3 of the directors have given the HBF office address as their home address (in breach of the Companies Act 1985), and details of the amount of acreage of greenbelt in 'land banks' held by HBF members.

Various filing cabinets were investigated and a meeting in the company's board room was interrupted - a rather keen secretary tried to keep protesters out but succeeded in locking three of them in the room with the Chief Executive. While this was going on inside, anarchists outside performed alternative versions of their favourite chart-topping tunes, including the Verve's 'The Plans Won't Work'. 'All this talk of building homes / It's bringing me down my love / Like a flai for a pris, in a new town, upon

an English down.'

Although no arrests were made everyone was searched on their way out of the building. The action got significant media coverage, especially in the construction trade press.

Other excursions by this happy band of appalling lyricists are planned. Contact 01865 721366.

Meanwhile, in a field near Bradford, activists from Leeds EF brought work on the greenfield housing development at Sandy Lane in Bradford to a six hour halt by climbing onto the only working digger. Security guards were notable by their absence,

reluctant with workers were good and there were no arrests. One resident commented "Most people round here are in total support of this kind of action, it's our only option left".

Residents have been taking direct action against the construction of the 92 Bryant Homes since work started including squatting the access to the site, locking the access gates and diverting a stream back across the work site. Those involved are hoping to broaden their campaign to take in other greenbelt housing developments. Contact the Sandy Lane housing campaign on 01274 495264.



BREWERY FIELDS ARRUGA!

URGENT — strap on your harness, rub your face in the mud and head for North Wales. *(more copy to follow)*

and control the means of production of food — simply in the interests of profit."

The *Millennium Court* (Gower, Dartmouth) is another that is sit-

typled in Nowhere's grassy slopes in Nowhere. (And the only regret I have now is that I wasn't able to destroy more of it.) I knew that the action in Brighton was an obvious one to take. But it was

BREWERY FIELDS 2000

URGENT! strap on your harness, rub your face in the mud and head for North Wales - people are needed at Brewery Fields, near Bangor. Contractors have moved in to build a road and 300 houses and police are imposing 1/2 mile bad conditions.

Brewery Fields is a 30 acre greenfield site, containing woodland, meadow, marsh and heathland and has not been ploughed for over 40 years. The site is owned by Gwynedd Council but has been used as recreation space by locals for decades. They have been campaigning against the development for six years - the only reason that the Council is proceeding is that the land was designated for development in the 1950s.

Last year an application to turn the land into a Town Green was rejected, despite the fact that it was shown to have been used daily by residents as a green for over thirty years. For directions or information contact the site mobile on 0836 563980 or office on 01248 3680178 or fax the camp on 01286 871874.

X MARKS THE SPOT

To highlight the risk of genetic pollution protestors visited an AgriEvo oilseed rape test site in Scotland this month. The group, a bunch of gnomes called The Human GeneGnome Project, painted a large red X across the field before signing the nearby road with placards declaring the area a 'biohazard'.

"It's time you humans woke up to the dangers of this technology," said a spokengnome. "AgriEvo have been reluctant to divulge the location of this dangerous experiment. If they won't let the human people know, then we will do it for them. The inhabitants of Ede, human and gnome alike, have a right to know that this crop will pollute the environment while the long-term results are unknown".

Gnome Chomsky added, 'The only people who can possibly benefit from GM crops are the multinational biotech companies like AgriEvo and Monsanto - they wish to commodify

and control the means of production of food - simply in the interests of profit."

The Human GeneGnome Project is hoping that while letters to MPs and polite phone calls don't work, a bunch of gnomes may be taken seriously. Contact the gnomes c/o Fife EP1 (see contacts list) or direct through any furry mag.

IT'S MAIZE JIM, BUT NOT AS WE KNOW IT!

The three French farmers who destroyed 5 tons of Novartis genetically engineered Bt maize seed (see French Farmers Destroy GE Maize in Jan AU) have been sentenced. Two of them to eight months suspended imprisonment, one to five months, and all to pay Novartis FR 500 000 damages. It is not yet clear whether they will appeal the decision or agree to pay Novartis.



One of the 3 included this in his account to the court: "Today, I am accused of committing a serious crime according to the law. The alleged crime is the destruction of sacks of genetically modified maize. Yes, this is serious and that's why I assume full responsibility for it. I believe in the ability of everyone to act as an individual. There is no place in our trade union for a hierarchy of responsibility. The strength of our union movement rests on this determination to mobilise free individuals who accept all the consequences of their acts knowing fully the motive for them. Yes, on the 11th of January I participated in the destruction of genetically modified maize, which was

upheld in Novartis's grain sales in Senegal. (And the only regret I have now, is that I wasn't able to destroy more of it.) I leave that to you to say in this way I was doing something illegal but it was necessary, and we had no other choice. The way in which genetically modified agricultural products have been imposed on European countries didn't leave us with any alternative. When was there a public debate on genetically modified organisms? When were farmers and consumers asked what they think about this? Never. The decisions have been taken at the level of the World Trade Organisation, and state machinery complicit with the loss of market forces. A democratic debate simply doesn't exist. Everything has to be allowed to continue in silence. By appearing before you today, I'm aware of being in breach of the law, which wants every citizen to be content with expressing her or his views by simply putting their vote in the urn every six years. Yes, this action was illegal, but I lay claim to it because it was legitimate. I don't demand clemency, but justice. Either we have acted in everyone's interest and you will acquit us, or we have shaken the establishment and in this case you will punish us. There is no other issue."

Contact: confessyourdebts@urp.org, fax +33 1 436 8003

GERROFF MY STREET

The recent pro-hunting Countryside March did not go off exactly as planned - the frequency on which it's 'March FM' was broadcasting for the day was hijacked by a group called the Hunt Sabs Broadcasting Corporation. These drowned out the Countryside Alliance's signal with their own and replaced the pro-hunting station with a DJ shouting 'Fuck off our land! Now!'

An undisclosed 4-figure sum was paid for the day's radio licence it was intended to broadcast speeches by various pro-hunt landowners. All attending were encouraged to name in those that did were treated to London's finest acid-house together with some words from our sponsor.

THE RIGHT TO ROAM 28 / 29 March & DIGGERS' DAY 1st April

Mass Trespass in commemoration of the Diggers movement. Meet 1pm Luton Station. At 1.30 coaches will take people to a mystery destination to trespass and make camp for the evening. The weekend will include speakers, music, special guests, festivities and feasting. Bring tents, musical instruments, banners and food to share. Site details will be available on 01865 722016 or 0402 176416 from the Saturday so that anyone can join in over the weekend. Contact TLO on 01865 722016 or email office@the-diggers.co.uk so that they can get the coaches to fit the numbers. Diggers Day will be a joint The Land Is Ours and Advocacy Service for Squatters day of respect for Winstanley and those nonviolent direct action pioneers of 1649. There will be a reflective chat and nibble at Weybridge, Surrey. Contact 0171 359 5185 or 017 8224391

@nti-copyright Distribute & Display

EPJAM, Sept 29, 1 Monmouth Street, Monmouth NP23 5BN. Tel: 01753 224 46 46. Email: acsl@monmouthcoun.gov.uk. Web: www.monmouthcoun.gov.uk. For more information visit www.monmouthcoun.gov.uk or contact 01753 224 46 46. For more information visit www.monmouthcoun.gov.uk or contact 01753 224 46 46.

- April

DOING TIME

"Under a government which also imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also in prison."

Henry David Thoreau

An increasing state reaction to nonviolent direct action is to attempt to control activists through physical imprisonment. Prison has the potential to be an effective deterrent but does not necessarily have to be so. Some activists see punishment as the most important part of civil disobedience, as it is the fear of personal consequences that often prevents us from stopping violence and creating a more just society. The function of punishment - to make citizens internalise control so that they become their own jailers - can be made to lose its effect, according to Per Hørrgren. Whether or not this is the case, while prison is a possible consequence of our actions as Earth First!, through non-payment of fines or other activity, it is important to demystify the institution through information and preparation.

WHAT TO EXPECT

"Those arrested as a result of nonviolent direct action have the advantage over most prisoners of knowing that they are there having made a degree of conscious choice, this knowledge can provide a degree of strength."

Being in prison can give a rounded view of the oppressive society against which we struggle in nonviolent resistance - this may be apparent not just in the organisational systems of prison but in the humans themselves - a significant number of people are poor and/or in prison for poverty related crime.

Prison is a lonely place - it aims to weaken solidarity, to try to isolate people from one another and reduce one's concentration to dealing with the demands of authority and of one's survival.

Entering prison is like going into another culture - new behaviour norms, language, symbols, new reality. You can expect some overcrowding, frustrating and irritating levels of noise and distraction and little personal space or privacy. It may be difficult to sleep, there may be radios and TVs, slamming bars and loud arguments. Time will be distorted - days will slip by but each hour may seem like an eternity. Food will be starchy and dull. You will learn to wait, do a phone call, a shower, a meal, the answer to a question, the time of day.

The wardens in prison have a great deal of power and they are aware of this. Long exposure to prison, whether as a prisoner or a guard, tends to have a corrosive effect on one's confidence in humanity, and the wardens are victims of this as well. They expect the worst out of people and are not often disappointed. Their principal concern is to preserve order, which demands an atmosphere of unquestioning respect (fear) for authority. This is their contribution to the process of 'rehabilitation', supplanting personal responsibility with thoughtless obedience and submission. Try not to indulge there in their exalted self image - expect that they should act with respect and compassion whilst remembering that you and they have different jobs to perform. Let them be responsible for keeping order while you are responsible for keeping your consciousness.

Just because your body is detained doesn't mean you've got to turn in your conscience and convictions along with your other belongings. Whether in prison or not, the freedom we enjoy is always the freedom we claim for ourselves. Being under lock and key does not deprive you of your essential freedom as long as you continue to insist on your power to say 'yes' or 'no' within the limits of whatever situation you find yourself. It was your commitment to make decisions for yourself about what you should and shouldn't do that landed you in prison in the first place and it remains a good principle to live by."

(Based on 'Doing Time to Jail', the Wir Resisters League Handbook)

FOOD

Different diets can be ordered for upon request - a vegan diet is guaranteed for members of the Vegan Society (01424 427193) and may be available for others. In recent times some prisoners have gone on hunger strike to demand a diet free of genetically manipulated products. For more on this contact GM-Free Prisoner Support, Dept 29, 1 Newton Street, Manchester M1

LETTERS

"While there is a soul in prison, I am not free"

Siggeus Doherty

Writing letters is possibly the most important thing that you can do from the outside... Prison distances you from the 'real' world and a friendly letter breaks down that feeling. Remember that all letters are censored, so do not write anything that may jeopardise other actions or anyone else's freedom. Try and find other things to write about than just how great you think the prison is and how you feel that you can't do as much. In the words of a prisoner, "Don't send me socks or sympathy. Send me a picture of yourself in the face of a missile site." If you cannot think of what to write, send a card, postcard, picture or poem. Don't necessarily expect a reply as some prisons limit the amount of letters which can be sent out and in those which don't, the prisoner still has to buy stamps and envelopes.

VISITS

Remand prisoners are normally allowed regular visits of one to three people (they all have to visit at the same time). Check in advance with the prisoner or their support rather than just turning up - not only will it be disappointing for the person expecting to visit, but as prison is a discriminating experience it can be degrading to expect one person only to see another. Convicted prisoners are entitled to less regular visits.

BOOKS, MONEY, FOOD, CASSETTES, OTHER CONSUMER GOODS

Regulations on these will vary - contact the Visitor's Centre at the particular prison for info.

GENERAL SUPPORT

Action on the above and other aspects of prison can be arranged by supporters on the outside, often via the prisoner's solicitor. Support after prison is also essential.

"With the threat of prison hanging over my head I try and find out as much as I possibly can about the prison I am likely to be sent to - I worry about what the other prisoners are like, will I fit in, how much stuff I can take with me, will I be on my own or sharing. When I arrive different questions become a problem: where do I go to eat, to shower, where is everything, this place is big."

After you come out of prison, take a holiday, or rest, to give yourself time to adjust to being out again and having space to move about. Give yourself time and tell others how you are feeling."

Tracy Hen

"Prisons and prison experiences vary enormously. The first time I went to a British prison was one of the most hellish weeks of my life. I was beaten up by the guards, denied a vegan diet, taken before the governor three times (and threatened with everything from the punishment block to the psychiatric wing) and put in a cell with someone in for murder and someone in for manslaughter. In contrast, much of my five months in another prison was a relatively rest - badminton, jogging, table tennis, evening classes, my own cell, passable vegan food, friendly enough screws."

Stephen Hancock

FURTHER INFO:

Annual Liberation Front Supporters Group (ALF SG), BCM 1160, London WC1N 3XX

Spirit of Freedom (Earth Liberation Prisoners), c/o RM HEAD, London WC1N 3XX

National Prisoners' Movement, RM-PROP, London WC1N 3XX, 0181 542 3744

Women in Prison, c/o Women's Environmental Network 0171 247 3327

The Daily Hammer (newsletter of the Poughkeepsie Support Network), no.8 'special issue on prisons', PSN, Box X, 111 Magdalen Road, Oxford

Tendin Poughkeepsie 2000 Handbook 01603 611953

Civil Disobedience, Henry David Thoreau, 1849

Any prisoner's dances that you can get your hands on

